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No. 108.

UNDER THE SNOW.

BY FRANK M. IMBIE.

Onward she wanders, frail and fair;
With ebbing feet cold and bare,
Tremblingly treading, aimlessly? No.
God help the wanderer, under the snow.

Where is she going this dark, fearful night,
Battling alone with the storm in its might?
List, in the bush, to the low, wailing tone?
"Oh, in this world, I'm alone, all alone—

Not alone, there's a wee life beating with mine,
A struggling being, with mine doth twine;
My child, his child, oh, pitiless woe,
We must not perish thus, under the snow.

"No, no, I'll not falter, I know he is there;
Ephesians banishing trouble and care;
Drinking in recklessly beauty's false glow,
Caring but little who's under the snow.

"See, how he tenderly kisses her hand!
See, how 'tis gleaming, that bright, circling
hand!
Gold is his bane; this causes my woe;
Yes, I'm forsaken, under the snow...

One little hand to her bosom is pressed;
Softly the tired head falls on her breast;
Sinking, she plaintively breathes his name,
"Why leave me thus to the world's cruel blame?"

A softened light steals in the death-dimmed eye,
"Darling, you're safe, you're safe!" he cries;
Darling, "I sweet, you love me, I know,
You will not let me die, under the snow."

Softer the snowflakes fluttered and fell,
Dreamingly dying, poor creature, 'tis well;
Bright in that mansion, the mocking lights glare,
Heeding not her who is dying there.

Savoy, then hearest her pitiful moan,
Take the earth-weary one carefully home!
The pure soul is freed from its shackles of woe;
Naught but the body rests under the snow.

Cecil's Deceit: on, THE DIAMOND LEGACY.

BY MRS. JENNIE D. BURTON,
AUTHOR OF "ADRIA, THE ADOPTED; OR, THE MYSTERY OF ELLERSFORD GRANGE," ETC., ETC.

CHAPTER IV.

TWO SHADOWS.

The marriage was fixed to take place in another fortnight. Cecil ordered no trousseau—her mourning would not admit of that—but she made plentiful additions to her wardrobe. Black, as a rule, is unbecoming to most women. But Cecil's fresh complexion was admirably calculated to bear the test of her somber garments; the perfect whiteness of her skin and rose-flushed cheeks were brought into more vivid relief by the strong contrast.

The intervening time was agreeably passed in visiting points of interest about the city. Mr. Frampton was well acquainted with the place in its business sections, but was obliged to apply to Dick Holstead for advice regarding the series of pleasure trips taken in the precincts.

Cecil demurred at first, but when Mr. Frampton insisted with a playful assumption of tyranny, and was seconded by Mrs. Holstead, she made no further objection. It was the object of the others to efface from her mind all painful reflections upon the late catastrophe, and she was glad to be released from the necessity of counterfeiting a grief which she did not feel.

So a light carriage was driven to the door almost daily, and Cecil, in company with her *fiance*, frequented galleries, libraries, and public drives, but not so persistently as to exhaust their attractions. Once or twice Richard Holstead accompanied them, but the young man was one of the world's workers, and could not often snatch holidays from his occupied time.

He was an architect and a draughtsman, and just now was engaged perfecting the plan of a private residence for a wealthy citizen. If this proved satisfactory, he was to receive the contract for the building. It was a desirable consummation, for the neat little house on Broad street was encumbered by a mortgage which position as master-builder would be long give him means of canceling.

Mr. Frampton became warmly interested in the young man. The fact that he had been chiefly instrumental in rescuing Cecil may have first drawn him to young Holstead; but the honest integrity of the latter, his intelligence and industry, soon formed the basis of a friendship which was not destined to fade away as merely a pleasant remembrance.

Two weeks passed speedily, and one pleasant autumn morning there was a private marriage in one of the plainer church edifices. It was Mr. Frampton's desire that the ceremony should be consummated in a church, and Cecil acquiesced, herself indifferent except that the words which would constitute her mistress of Frampton Place should be uttered beyond recall.

She had put off her mourning attire for the occasion. An element of superstition made her shrink from being married in black. Her dress of white India muslin, though of dead fineness, was simply made, and displayed nothing to indicate that it was a bridal robe. Her mantle and bonnet combined simplicity and richness, and would have been equally unmarked by an ordinary observer.

They were accompanied by Dick and Mrs. Holstead, the only other witnesses being the sexton and one or two idlers who lounged in, scents a marriage from the opened church. A passer-by stepped into the porch just as the ceremony was concluded.

He was a slender, sallow-faced man of perhaps thirty years. His hair and eyes were black, his nose aquiline, his lips thin



The man in the porch turned his gaze toward them listlessly; then, with a start, leaned forward.

and shaded by a jetty mustache. He was haggard and there were hollow circles about his eyes, yet they did not seem evidences of dissipation. His clothes were shabby but gracefully worn; his slender brown hands carefully kept, and bearing no traces of toil upon them.

He was met at the door by one of the idle spectators mentioned, the latter wandering out again.

"Is it a marriage?" he asked, with the easy familiarity which men, though strangers, can adopt toward each other.

"Yes, but it's over. Another case of May and December, I opine."

"Ah!" The stranger lounged against one of the porch columns, and the other, with his curiosity satisfied, passed out.

There was the sweep of white drapery down the aisle; Mrs. Holstead's best silk rustled its stiff folds audibly, and the little party came out through the doorway. Cecil's hand rested lightly upon the arm of her husband, her eyes were raised to his face as he spoke some low words to her, the nature of which could be easily determined by his proud, fond glance.

The man in the porch turned his gaze toward them listlessly; then, with a start, leaned forward, his face grown eager, his eyes searching the features of the bride with a half-incredulous scrutiny.

Cecil passed without looking toward him. A carriage was waiting, drawn close to the curb. The driver sprung down to open the door as the little party descended the steps leading from the church, closely followed by the dark-faced stranger.

The latter sauntered forward a pace or two as Mr. Frampton handed his new-made wife into the carriage. Then he turned, as if about to pass over the crossing, and looking back through the open carriage-door, encountered Cecil's gaze. Her lips parted slightly, grew white, her blue eyes dilated, an anguished expression swept over her face.

A procession of some kind was passing through a neighboring street, and at this moment the band attending it struck up a

joyous measure. The fiery thoroughbreds were already champing their bits with impatience to be off, and at the unexpected sound they started forward, rearing and plunging wildly.

The driver sprung for their heads and succeeded in grasping them, and a moment later the animals stood cowed and trembling. But quick as he had been, he had not prevented mischief. The man who had taken such apparent interest in the bride was lying now in the center of the street, senseless, dusty and bleeding. The shaft had struck him upon the shoulder, and the steel-shod hoofs trampled him down. Cecil had not fainted, but she lay back against the cushions so motionless and pale that those seeing her thought she had.

Richard Holstead gave a few rapid directions to the men who came crowding around, then consulted briefly with Mr. Frampton. The latter gentleman turned to Mrs. Holstead, who still stood upon the pavement; the carriage was backed to the curb, and he assisted her into it, himself following. The coachman mounted the box and the carriage rolled away, Dick remaining to take charge of the injured man.

It had been arranged that the newly-wed pair should return to the Holsteads for a few hours, and take an afternoon train for the bridegroom's home. A whim of Cecil's changed this programme.

"You will see for me that he lacks no care," said Mr. Frampton, drawing a bank-note from his wallet. "I can but feel in a measure responsible for his accident. I should like to know that the poor fellow stands a chance of recovering."

"I should like to see him," Cecil said. "Can we not go the hospital this afternoon?"

"My dear, we would have to obtain passes, and might be detained too late to reach the train."

"Then we can take a later one, or wait until morning," she argued. "Please oblige me, Hugh!"

What husband of an hour can withstand the pleading of his bride? It did not seem strange to Mr. Frampton, himself and sympathetic, that the stranger's disaster should so deeply affect his wife, or that she should so interest herself regarding him. Cecil's will prevailed, and Dick—ever accommodating—volunteered to arrange the preliminaries for their visit to the institution.

They gained access to it during the day. The man lay upon the narrow bed, his eyes closed, moaning now and then with the pain of his hurts.

He had not been conscious, the nurse said, even when his wounds were dressed. His shoulder was dislocated and his body was badly bruised, but the worst feature of the case was caused by a blow upon his head, the extent of the injury inflicted not yet having been accurately ascertained.

Mr. Frampton, turning from the bedside, was startled at the pallor of his wife's countenance.

"This has proved too shocking a spectacle for you, Eve," he said, self-reproachfully.

"I should not have permitted you to come."

"The close air made me faint for a moment," returned Cecil. "Nothing more! See, my nerves are quite steady."

She laid her hand, firm and quiet, upon his. She had learned the lesson of self-control long ago, and had come here prepared for the conviction she yet hoped against. At sound of her voice the sick man's eyes opened with a gleam of consciousness in them, then closed again weakly.

Hours afterward he was surprised the nurse by rousing suddenly from his apparent stupor, and making inquiries regarding his afternoon visitors.

Cecil shuddered, and drew her dress close about her as they passed through the long wards. She had no curiosity to witness the different phases of suffering which surrounded her. She averted her gaze from the prostrate forms, the faces outlined against

the pillows, some wasted by long illness, others flushed with fever, all bearing some stamp of disease.

Had she been observant she might have noted one, a woman, with dead-blond hair cut close to her head, with face, hands and arms swathed in light bandages. If inquiry had been made, the matron could have told her that No. 19 had been rescued from the late disastrous conflagration—that her recovery had first seemed impossible, that she had survived the worst crisis and was now tediously mending. But Cecil saw nothing to distinguish that one sufferer from the hosts of others she had passed.

They missed the train they had first proposed taking, but departed later, after taking an affectionate leave of the Holsteads. The latter persons would accept of no remuneration for their kindness to Cecil, and parted from her with real regret. The little house on Broad street seemed dull after she had gone; the inmates missed the fair, bright face from among them.

It was late in the afternoon of the following day that the Frampton carriage at the village depot met the home-coming master and his bride. Mr. Frampton had telegraphed the date of his marriage and immediate return. Frampton Place had been agitated beyond its usual custom by hurried preparations for their reception.

The gray-haired coachman, standing by his sleek, well-fed steeds, touched his hat with smiling deference, and some respectful, congratulatory expressions.

"Thank you, Giles, my good fellow!" Mr. Frampton returned, heartily. "Yes, this is a glad day for me. And now, how are they all at the house—is Miss Olive quite well?"

"Yes, sir; all well, sir, except Mrs. Blodgett's neuralgia, and Emmy's headaches, which are both about as before, sir."

"Very well. Home at once, Giles!"

Bowling over the smooth road, Cecil roused up from her weary apathy to obtain a first glimpse of her future home. It was a fertile, level stretch of country, broken by clumps of forest growth, alternating with cultivated fields. The village they had left was scarcely a mile distant from Hampton Place.

The carriage turned from the highway into an avenue which formed a circuitous course through the grounds. The house itself was so embowered in trees and shrubs, that only imperfect glimpses of it could be obtained until quite nearly approached.

"Almost there," said Mr. Frampton, with the eagerness of one who delights in home comforts. "I hope you will love Olive, Eve. The child's early life was not happy as it should have been, and I fear even Frampton Place has been dull for her. It will be different with you there."

"I don't fear but we shall prove friends," Cecil said, smiling upon him. To herself she remarked:

"He thinks too much of that child; of course she is petted and spoiled by his indulgence. I'll have her sent away to school, I think."

Her husband had spoken often of his niece and ward, Olive Tremaine. She was the child of an only sister, many years younger than himself, who married much against the wishes of her family. The marriage was not a happy one. The husband, disappointed at finding his wife's fortune secured to her in such manner that he could not gain possession of it, soon grew negligent and abusive. He was a spendthrift and a gambler, and the wild life he led kept his wife in a state of constant anxiety for his safety.

He was brought home one day, shot in a fracas in which he had been a participant. Mrs. Tremaine did not long survive him, and dying, left her one child to Hugh Frampton's guardianship.

The carriage drew up before the entrance.

"Welcome home, my wife!" Mr. Frampton exclaimed, lifting her out and conducting her into the hall where the servants, headed by the housekeeper, awaited them. With a few kind words to all, he hurried her past up the stairway to the apartments prepared for her.

"I know you are tired, my dear," he said. "Ah, here is Olive."

Cecil had expected to find in her husband's niece a mere child. Instead, she met a girl maturing in early womanhood, self-possessed and accomplished as a thorough course under the best instructors could render her.

"I am prepared to like you," she said to Cecil, laughingly. "Uncle Hugh's wife has been so long in contemplation, that you have seemed to occupy an imaginary place in the household, which your coming will agreeably fill."

Cecil was actually installed mistress of Frampton Place.

CHAPTER V.

THE ADVERTISEMENT.

Frampton House was a rambling old building, incongruous in its combination of stone, brick and framework. It had been in possession of the family for generations back, and came to the present owner from an uncle whose name he bore. Besides this inheritance he had amassed an enviable fortune in trade, and, having retired from active business, came here to spend the remainder of his days in the enjoyment of the emoluments he had gained.

The house for the greater part was gloomy and antiquated. It was originally an oblong stone structure, with massive, jail-like walls, and narrow windows let in high up from the floor. As the elder branches of

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the family increased, or their inclinations prompted additions had been made to this. First had been a long frame projection containing two suites of rooms, flanking each side of a narrow passage-way. Then a front of brick, which had been considered a triumph of masonry in its day; and from this wings and porches had been extended, until, at last, the original structure was left far in the rear.

The grounds about were extensive and cleanly kept, but without other ornamentation than velvety greensward and dense foliage.

The question of improvements had lately been agitated by the inmates of the place. Partitions were to be torn down, bay windows and verandas to supersede the deep dark porches; halls and staircases to be widened, folding doors, plate glass, cornices, panelings and gilt, all were to work in the proposed transformation.

The opportunity recalled to Mr. Frampton the chance of requiting a debt of gratitude. Accordingly he wrote to Richard Holstead, proffering him the supervision of the work at a liberal rate.

Eight months had passed since the date our story opens. It was a morning in the late spring-time, and the trees about the place were in their gala-dress of newly-opened leaves. A few days more would change them thick and dark, but as yet they were of the vivid green which is transparent when the sun shines through, displaying all the intricate tracery of delicate fibers. The ivy which clambered over the older portions of the house, though an evergreen, looked fresher and more glossy than the influence of dewy nights, and bright sunny days.

The family at Frampton Place were seated at the breakfast-table. The room was long and low, with oak wainscoting blackened by age, and was lined on one side with china closets and stationary sideboards. One end was almost filled by a huge old-fashioned fireplace, closed now for the summer, which was overtopped by a massive oaken mantelpiece. Windows and doors crowded another side, and the remaining end gave access to a square from which passageways branched in different directions. The hangings and carpet were crimson, the furniture heavy oak, well in keeping with the apartment.

In summer time the sun shining in through the open windows, and in winter the ruddy blaze upon the hearth, gave it an air of cheerfulness from which the darkened walls and lowering ceiling could not detract.

Mrs. Frampton had already put aside her deep mourning. She was arrayed now in a plain white wrapper, with an edging of black at the throat and wrists. Ever and anon, as the desultory conversation flagged, her husband glanced at her with proud, loving eyes. He had grown to idolize her, and she was quite content to be the "old man's darling."

Olive Tremaine, quietly discussing her taste and coffee, looked scarcely younger than the mistress of Frampton Place, the difference of a half-dozen years was so easily scored by their contrasting styles.

Olive at eighteen, with a well-developed figure and stature above the medium, with complexion, eyes and hair of dusky richness, had gained the easy carriage which belongs to mature years.

The silence of a moment which had settled upon the little group was broken by the entrance of a servant with the morning mail. Mr. Frampton, distributing the letters, afterward turned to the examination of his own correspondence.

"Holstein accepts," he remarked, refolding a sheet he had perused. "He'll be here in a day or so. I'm heartily glad, for I would rather trust the job with him than in other hands."

"I can not rid myself of a feeling of obligation to the Holsteins," Mrs. Frampton said. "Perhaps we can repay their kindness in a measure now."

"The young man must feel himself, as one of us," her husband replied. "You will see to it, I know Eve, and you, Olive, must put aside social distinctions for the time, and act with us on the basis of democratic equality."

Olive Tremaine had the prejudices of an aristocrat. It was not that she shrank from the poorer classes on account of their poverty, but she had full faith in the supremacy of "blood" and high breeding. She looked up now a little haughtily.

"It is your right to command in your own house, uncle Hugh. I think I have never forgotten the civility due any guest of yours, but I shall not descend from my own proper social sphere to equalize myself even with this prime favorite of yours."

But Mr. Frampton was already buried in the depths of the morning paper and consequently in oblivion to all else; his wife, from indifference or disinterest, did not take up the gauntlet for the Holsteins, and Olive's speech remained unheeded.

The gentleman had followed word for word the sentiments contained in the leading articles, and was turning to local items, when a prominent paragraph under the head of "Personal" caught his eye. He glanced at it, rubbed his glasses, and read it carefully through, then dropped his paper with an ejaculatory—

"Bless me!"

Mr. Frampton remained indifferent; Olive looked up inquiringly.

"Bless me!" repeated Mr. Frampton, gazing with some surprise at the former. "This must be meant for you, Eve!"

Raising the paper he read:

"If the daughter of Captain Edward Collings Brooke, formerly of Berkshire, England, and who embarked for the United States in the ship Phoenix, June, 18—, will apply at the office of the undersigned, she will learn something very much to her advantage. JOHN CUNNINGTON, Attorney and Solicitor, 17—st., N.Y. City."

"It must be meant for you, Eve," he repeated, as if the reiteration should draw from her some explanation of the paragraph.

"Evidently," she replied, extending her hand for the paper. "It is very strange—I can not understand it. Who can be so desirous to communicate with me that such an agency should be employed?"

"Some of your relatives, perhaps," suggested her husband.

"Scarcely," replied Cecil slowly, mentally considering the statistics she had stored up regarding the Collingsbrookes. "Poor Captain Collings Brooke's daughter could excite no interest in the minds of his titled kinsfolk."

"Well, what do you wish done about it, my dear?"

"I suppose somebody must ascertain what it all means. I don't know but I shall go to the city myself; not that I attach

much importance to this mysterious hint of something to my advantage, but the trip will tally with some shopping which I wish to do."

"Just as you think best, Eve. I will accompany you when you wish."

The subject was dropped then. Cecil felt a vague uneasiness, and pored over the advertisement when she was alone, but there was nothing in its stereotyped wording to afford her a clue. She felt almost tempted to let it pass without response, but such a course would excite the wonderment of her husband. After all, she thought, she had gained beyond fear of losing them. Nothing could wrest them from her, even should seemingly improbable exposure come.

Nothing? Cecil told herself so, resolutely. Yet a thought crept up which made her shiver as with a chill. What was it? Some skeleton of her past which would not lie buried—a ghost that sometimes defied her power to exorcise.

CHAPTER VI.

THE FOWLER AND THE SNAKE.

MR. FRAMPTON had gone out. Olive was in the music-room diligently practicing. Mrs. Frampton had made her toilet and was sitting down to some bit of ornamental needlework, when a servant came to her with a card.

"Victor D'Arno," she read. "I think I can not know him. It is probably Mr. Frampton he desires to see."

"No, madam, he inquired particularly for you."

Marveling much, Cecil glanced in the mirror after the fashion of pretty women married or single, and went to meet her guest. He stood by one of the windows, half concealed by the falling curtains, but turned quickly at the sound of the opening door.

Cecil came in with the easy assurance of a cultivated woman. Midway across the floor she stopped, her hands clasping in the nervous fashion which had also belonged to Eve Collings Brooke, her eyes dilating and color fading as she gazed fixedly at him.

A slender man with pale, olive skin and close-cut, jetty hair, his face smoothly shaven, his eyes dark, with accurately penciled brows. His dress was plain, but of fine material and fashionably made. A costly ring gleamed upon his finger, but with this exception he wore no jewelry.

Much changed indeed, but the same face which Cecil had last seen blanched and drawn with pain, pressed against the pillow of the hospital bed. The man who, shabby and haggard, had watched her from the church upon her marriage-day.

Cecil opened her lips, but her voice sounded harsh and strained.

"You?" she said. "Why have you come to me?"

He came forward, smiling.

"I am glad you are not inclined to use ceremony toward me, Mrs. Frampton. Will you not welcome me for the sake of old remembrances?"

"Are you trying to sting me?" she demanded, with a pitiful look on her white face. "Don't you know that I blotted out all of my old existence when I began this?"

"Is it then so satisfying?"

Her lips twitched painfully, then some latent pride arose, enabling her to look him steadily in the face.

"Yes," she said, "I have all I either desired or hoped. I have been quite content."

"Have been," he repeated, his eyes seeking hers with a magnetic force which would not be evaded. "Will it be different now?"

"Why should it be?" she asked, but her fingers locked themselves in a strained clasp.

The man's power over her, whatever it may have been, was not extinct. She felt it, struggled against it, yet knew herself helpless before him.

"Because you can not forget the past, Cecil. Because, seeing me, you can not clear yourself into the belief that you have any affection for your doting old husband."

"I put love away from me once," she replied, her voice quietly monotonous now.

"It wounded me, so I said I would never love again. My husband is very kind and I respect him. I would not have it otherwise."

"But wounds heal," he said, significantly.

"It was never my fault, Cecil!"

"Was it not? Ah, well! Tell me what you want, and then go. It is better that we do not see each other."

A kind of triumph flashed across his face.

"Then you are not indifferent, as you would have me think," he said, softly. "Is there danger that the old ties prove more binding than the new?"

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"Time will prove it. Remember what I suffered, and how I was vindicated."

"I will trust to time, and the justice of Heaven. But we can not stay here, Madeleine."

"Where can we go?"

"There is but one house for us—the poor hut where my father lives and toils."

Madeleine clung to her husband, hiding her face on his shoulder.

"It distresses me no less than you, my wife; but I know of nothing better. You will have a shelter there, and I must go to sea again."

"Oh, Lewis!"

"Courage, Madeleine! I may prosper yet. Fortune is capricious. It is lucky all this has happened in Antwerp; the shame will not follow us to England."

"When do we go?"

"Immediately, I think. We have not much to pack up. Can you be ready by to-morrow?"

"Lewis, you will not give up all without one effort!"

"No. I shall see my employers early in the morning. I shall lay every thing before them; with my resignation of the situation I have held."

Dorant carried his resolution into effect. The partners of the house unanimously expressed their conviction of his truth and innocence. But appearances were so strongly against him, and the knowledge of what had happened had been spread so extensively through the talking of the fellow Hugh, that they could not but acquiesce in the prudence of Dorant's determination to quit their service. His assault on Hugh, too, was known; the man lay in a dangerous condition; and his threats of resorting to legal measures to punish his adversary, had been loudly uttered. No doubt he would put his threats into execution as soon as he was able. Then the scandal would become public.

But for that imprudence they might possibly have kept the matter quiet; but now it could not be. They parted amicably, and even with offers of a large gratuity in place of a recommendation that might be available in seeking other places.

Dorant decided it. It was soothing to him to know that his late employers were his friends; and he agreed with them that he could no longer serve them with usefulness. Thus it happened that the little family returned to the fishing village where Madeleine's mother was buried, and where Dorant's father lived, solitary and in penury.

It was the second time Madeleine had sought this humble house as a refuge, and the same cordial kindness welcomed her as before.

But a change had passed over herself. With dreams of a brighter future for her child, her ambition had been awakened. Almost unconsciously she had cherished expectations of better days, when her daughter, if not herself, should be admitted into a social sphere more suited to her own birth and her tastes. She returned to her painting, though very little could be realized by the sale of sketches; hardly enough to purchase for the little girl the pretty dresses that so pleased her. It was her resolve to educate the child carefully, and to give her instruction in music. She promised to be beautiful. Who could tell that some change for the better in their fortunes might not come about when Oriel was of an age to be married!

Again the tasks were hers which she had once performed cheerfully; they were now dolefully irksome to her. Her husband perceived the change, and bitterly did he grieve over it; though he concealed his grief, as Madeleine hoped she did her discontent. No words but those of kindness and affection were ever spoken between them.

Once Lewis proposed that she should visit her friend, Mrs. Byrne; but his wife shrank from the proposition with evident pain. She had no wish, she said, to take her daughter into scenes that would make the only home they had look more squalid and gloomy by the contrast. Besides, did he not know that Mrs. Byrne had gone abroad—it was said to spend some time?

One day, in one of her long walks with the child, they were noticed by a lady who passed in a traveling carriage. She was struck with the exquisite loveliness of little Oriel, and stopped to talk with her, asked where she lived, and seemed surprised that so much grace and refinement as the mother appeared to possess, should belong to one who lived in abject poverty.

"If you would not mind parting with the little girl for her good," she said to Madeleine, "I should like to take her for my own. I have long wished to adopt a child of respectable parentage, who would not be claimed. I am rich and can leave her a fortune. Will you let me come to see you about it?"

"You ask me to part with my child!" demanded Madeleine. "Have you children of your own?"

"I have not; for that reason I would like to adopt one."

"I thank you, madam. A mother would never have made such a proposal."

Madeleine drew the child from the stranger, and turning away, walked quickly on, without another word.

Little Oriel looked back at the elegantly-dressed lady, who was stepping into the carriage.

"Mamma," she said, "did the lady want to take me away?"

"She did, my child! But you—you would not leave mamma, I hope?"

"Oh, mamma! if you and I could ride all day in such a pretty carriage!"

Madeleine was stung to the heart. She had noticed with a feeling of envy she could not repress, how superbly dressed was the woman who had not scrupled to insult her, and here was the little one herself sighing after the splendors she could never obtain!

Seating herself on a stone by the wayside, she wept bitterly. It did not enter her thoughts to inquire how much of the love of luxury she herself had nourished in the bosom of her infant. She only wished that she had perished with her mother in the cruel waves.

Dorant saw the traces of agitation in her pale cheeks and chafed eyelids, when she was again at home, and asked the cause.

It was another vexation to be questioned thus, as if she had no right even to be unhappy. In the impulse of her wounded heart she told him all.

"It was indiscreet in a stranger," he said, "make such a request. But she meant well: you must not be vexed, dear Madeleine."

"Must not be vexed when so gross an insult is offered to our poverty!"

"It was not meant as such." "Lewis, you are obtuse to such things. You can not feel them; you have never known better fortune!"

He felt the reproach, but made no reply.

"I could bear the privations we have to suffer; but to be coolly esteemed as destitute of natural feeling, because I am poor—it is very hard."

"She did not view it in that light; she thought you might esteem a fortune for the child an object great enough to induce you to make the sacrifice."

"So it might be in some cases; in that of marriage, for instance. But not for a mother to separate herself from her infant."

She did not observe the pain in Doran's face; nor in after conversations did he allow her to know how deeply her words wounded him.

Thus it came about that a difference—not enough to be called an estrangement—grew up between the two. There was little sympathy in many things; and Dorant was more and more reproached himself that he had wedded one so unfitted for the life destined to be his. Madeleine was subject to low spirits, but she strove, through all, to do her duty.

CHAPTER X.

MARLIT'S FIRST VISIT.

"Going just as I come! That's my luck! I always frighten people away!"

Such was the greeting called out from the road by a stranger, one day, as Dorant was leaving the cottage by the sea. He turned to welcome his friend Duclos, and Madeleine asked him to walk in.

"As young and beautiful as ever, madam. You will pardon my foreign manners. I have changed in nothing, except that I have been in service, and gained a colonelship—not in the English army, but one that brings little besides honor."

The visitor was soon made at home. He was carrying dispatches, he said, and could not stop over night. There was a prospect of a storm, but that must not delay him. He preferred not to take the coach, for fear of being intercepted; but intended to walk seven miles to another station. Dorant must be his guide.

The little girl here attracted the soldier's attention. He regarded her with admiration.

"Whom does she resemble—her father?" asked the mother.

"Say yes, sir," said the little creature, lifting her soft dark eyes to his face.

"And why should I say yes, my little dear?"

"Then perhaps mamma will not cry any more," returned the child.

Madeleine colored with vexation.

"I would say it, my child, but for one difficulty."

"What is that?" asked the mother.

"I don't like telling stories!" Mrs. Dorant, your little girl is the living image of yourself. She looks like no one else. You are very pretty, little pet."

"You are not pretty, sir," answered the candid child; "but I like you all the same."

Duclos stayed to dinner, but insisted on setting out the same night. There had been a fall of snow, and in vain his hostess represented that the roads were almost impassable. They might be, he said, for carriages; but he intended to walk. The hours that were to spare before dusk, he must use in the village, collecting a few necessities.

While they still sat at the table, the elder Dorant came in with a newspaper, dripping wet, which he said his dog had picked up in the road.

A newspaper was a novelty in the cottage, and though this was an old one, its contents were found interesting.

There was a record of a battle in Germany, in which mention was made of the heroism of Colonel Duclos. The soldier did not disguise the satisfaction he felt at the congratulations of his friends. To turn the conversation he entreated "Madame" to permit her little girl to accompany her father and himself to the village. He would carry her, he said, and the fresh air would do her good.

"You must give me time to dress her," said Mrs. Dorant.

"Oh, of course!" exclaimed Duclos.

"These mothers are all alike; their weakness is to show off their children to the best advantage. Be sure you put on her new frock, and her pretty little cap!"

When Madeleine took the child out, the colonel continued, addressing Dorant:

"I could almost envy you, my friend, in having a wife so intelligent and accomplished, among people so uncultivated."

"You know she was not born here!" Lewis said, gravely.

"You can not doubt, however, that she was made for you," remarked the soldier.

"I have sometimes thought so; but then the old feeling that I never was good enough for her, comes over me in spite of myself."

"You have no business to have such thoughts."

"And since fortune has dealt so hardly with us, and she is often so unhappy, I have thought more of it."

Here Madeleine came back with the little girl, who readily made friends with the stranger, on the promise of something pretty to be bought in the village.

"Who is merry and happy now?" he asked, as he took up the child in his arms, and danced about with her. "Come, Dorant, are you ready?"

"Take care of those loose stones, and the water in the road!" called out the mother after them, as they picked their way outside the gate.

"These mothers think their babes are glass toys!" cried Duclos, as he followed Lewis across the bluffs.

Madeleine was left alone in the cottage, or hut, as it might rather be called. She seated herself with putting away the remnants of dinner, sweeping the hearth, and replenishing the fire.

She did not perceive the face of a stranger at the window, peering at her through the folds of the thin muslin curtain.

When she had made the room tidy, she seated herself on a low seat near the fireplace, with some work for the child.

There was a low knock at the door. She listened, and it was repeated.

Madeleine lifted her pale face, wet with tears, in renewed astonishment.

"It was, as I said, your uncle's dearest wish that this marriage should take place,

to accomplish this, he used every means to discover you, but in vain."

"And I was suffering the evils of poverty, so near him!" murmured the young matron.

"Twelve miles? I hoped it was much nearer."

"You seem fatigued, sir. Will you walk in and rest?"

With thanks the stranger accepted the invitation, saying that he had been on foot several hours.

He took the offered seat, looked around the room, and remarked its appearance of comfort.

Madeleine could not but feel that the freedom of his observations indicated his sense of her inferiority, as the daughter of poverty, to one more favored of fortune.

The old feeling of mortification came over her. She turned her face to the window, and did not reply. She thought the stranger ought to have discovered that she was his equal, in spite of her mean dress and surroundings.

The next moment she reproached herself for her foolish pride, and became more communicative.

"You are not a native of this place," quietly said the stranger, after some further conversation.

"I am not."

"It was a great misfortune that brought you here. Pardon me, madam; you have I have heard something of your history."

"That is not strange," returned Madeleine, wearily. "It was, as you say, a great misfortune—the loss of my mother."

"You were voyagers from the States?"

"I was born in England, though most of my life had passed in the United States."

"And it was after the death of your father that Mrs. Winchester determined to return to England, in search of her brother, with whom her home had been till her marriage."

Madeleine looked up, surprised, at the stranger who uttered her mother's name, and seemed to know her story so well.

He was a man still youthful in appearance, though his form had grown rather more robust than when we saw him first as the secretary of Mr. Clermont. It had kept its promise of strength. The lines of his face had hardened, and the first impression was even repulsive, but lighted by genial humor, there was something singularly attractive in the countenance. The contour of the features was rigid, giving the idea of remarkable power in the character; the firmness about the chiseled lips denoted the boldness of command.

The air of authority was inseparable from such a face, and insensibly its magnetic influence subdued the instinctive opposition of the young matron who looked at him. It was a kind of fascination she did not understand, and was not prepared to resist; though something in her inmost soul recoil ed from the stranger.

"Before I go on," said the visitor, "will you permit me to examine the necklace and bracelet you preserved from the wreck? I have a description of them; and they will be the chief evidence of that sort, of your identity. You will understand, not for my own satisfaction, but that of your late uncle's solicitors."

In utter bewilderment, but under an impulse that drove her to obedience, Madeleine rose and opened the ebony box. She took the bracelet from it and handed it to the stranger; then the necklace.

He compared them with a written description, taken from his pocketbook. Then he nodded in expression of entire satisfaction, and muttered:

"They can not question that evidence."

"You have not told me," said Mrs. Dorant, "why you seek me out at this late day, since the fulfillment of my uncle's wish is impossible."

"I will tell you, madam. It was for that I came to find you. Your cousin, Edward Clermont, is dead."

"Dead!" echoed his listener.

"The will of your late uncle appoints you the heir to his vast property, in the event of his son's death without issue."

(Concluded next week—commenced in No. 105.)

The stranger watched her furtively. He thought he had never seen a more beautiful woman. Her auburn hair clustered about her temples in delicate rings, and was parted back in rich waves from cheeks fresh as a rose in the color called up by emotion.

Her violet eyes, ringed with their wet lashes, were large and soft; her features had the classic regularity of aristocratic blood.

He noticed the small and delicately shaped ear, another evidence of gentle birth, and the small, dimpled hand and perfectly-molded arm that told had not embrowned or made coarse. All this he observed with a cold calculation, as a merchant would note the advantageous points in a contemplated purchase. No feeling was mixed up in his satisfaction.

"He might have succeeded better, madam, had his strength held out; but his days were numbered. He left a will, appointing me as guardian to his surviving son, and enjoined it on me to continue the search he had prosecuted in vain."

denily wondered how ever she had endured them.

Every thing was recalled so freshly by the sight of that trifle; and, by the time Regina had gone over in memory all the old ground, she was more miserably wretched than she had been since that first, dreariest year of their estrangement.

Then she grew to speculating as to where Wilbert Austin was; whether seven years had changed him much; had left him forgetful of the gloomy past and her, or found him—and she barely admitted it to her own heart—as it found her—sorrowing, repentant, loyal?

That was just where it was; that was altogether the trouble with Regina Armstrong; that it was that planted those unrefined shadows in her eyes, that made her "cold as an icicle."

The simple truth was she loved Wilbert Austin with a truer, a better, a

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Our Arm-Chair.

Tree-Culture.—We adverted, a few weeks since, to the propriety of planting trees—joining it upon all our friends as a duty as well as an act of beneficence. The item, we see, has awakened attention, and now we are pleased to learn that, in Iowa, the planting of both useful and ornamental trees is encouraged by law. If a man plants an acre of forest-trees, he is released from taxation on one hundred dollars valuation for ten years, or its equivalent, one thousand dollars for one year. For each acre of fruit-trees planted his tax is exempted on fifty dollars for five years. The same allowance is made of ornamental shade-trees along the highways. There are now maple forests growing from which sugar is made where fifteen years ago only the coarse prairie grass flourished.

The recent introduction in Congress of a bill to actually donate to a man two acres of the public domain for every hundred trees he should plant thereon, is a move in the right direction; but we should have a law similar to that now prevailing in some of the countries of Europe, where a person is compelled to plant a vigorous young tree for every tree which he cuts down. Such a law would soon replace the criminal waste which is now stripping our country of its forests and fast rendering once-beautiful hills and valleys nothing but drear fields.

Industry vs. Genius.—The great Alexander Hamilton said to an intimate friend:

"Men give me credit for genius. All the genius I have lies just in this: when I have a subject in hand I study it profoundly; day and night it is before me; I explore it in all its bearings; my mind becomes pervaded with it. Then the efforts which I make are pleased to call the fruit of genius. It is the fruit of labor and thought."

There you have it, boys—the key to success. Genius is given to but few, but talent to many; and he who, like Hamilton, becomes noted among men must do just as he did—explore things and conquer great results by labor and thought. That is the open sesame to leadership in human affairs or to success in business enterprise.

Debating Societies.—A correspondent asks our opinion of Debating Societies and what good comes from belonging to such an organization?

The greatest possible good. That is, in such a society the young man ascertains just what he is capable of, if he is a studious participant in its exercises. The great drawback to many, a person's progress in life is a want of the power to express, well and clearly, his thoughts, before an assembly or in conversation. This comes from want of that practice or training which the debating society gives. There, in the unrestricted and uncriticized freedom of debate, and the ready intelligence awakened by attrition of ideas, the young man soon becomes not only an easy speaker, but learns to arrange his ideas in logical form, so that, in after life, he is qualified for almost any emergency of speech.

Another important office of the debating society is to familiarize the member with the "Rules of Order" by which all public assemblies are governed. It is quite an art to preside well over a Convention, Legislative body, Committee or common town meeting; and one reason why so many men are not qualified for presiding officer is because they have never belonged to a debating society where the Rules of Order were enforced.

Every village and every school should have its debating club, and young men anxious for self-improvement should see to it that such a club is organized where it now is wanting.

The True Life.—A daily paper tells the pitiful story of the daughter of an honest carpenter, who, being an only daughter, was encouraged by her mother and five brothers to think herself a "lady," and therefore did no hard work, dressed well, and waited for some one to make her a "lady" by a rich marriage. Well, inspired with such false ideas of what constituted happiness, and despising work, she grew to be vain, self-willed, loving gayety, and, in the end, shipwrecked what should have been a beautiful and useful life.

The story is a sad one, but is just like many others now unwritten, wherein girls have drifted into forbidden channels, owing to the errors of their education. The mother who says: "I have worked hard all my life, and my daughter shall be spared the necessity for caring for herself," is simply doing that daughter the greatest of wrongs. It is saying: "Be a shiftless, aimless being, living only for pleasure; others must take care of you," and the daughter, young, giddy and inexperienced, is not loth to play the lady; she grows up with false ideas of her responsibilities, with no qualifications for self-support or self-reliance, and, in the vast majority of cases, leads a most miserable life.

Oh, parents, when will you learn the priceless worth of morals grounded in that devotion to duty which alone fits the person for life? When will you bid of the folly of attaching that importance to show, or "position," or social standing, which makes you live a living lie, and sacrifices all your happiness to mere pretense? Give your children, above all things, that conception of life which makes them industrious, thoughtful, provident, dutiful, and you bestow upon them what is worth more than money—a grand fitness for the future that is before them.

A COMMON FAILING.

Now, I've got a very good subject to lecture upon, and one that I don't think I've ever "peppered" before; so you must be just as solemn as it is possible for you to be, while Eve addresses you. She's put on

grandma's spec's so as to look dignified. Hem! hem!

When you make a bargain, make it and don't be so foolish as to say, "Oh, it's all well enough, we won't dispute about trifles." When you hear that speech, you may know that there's some cheating at the back of it. It places you in the power of another. I found that out to my sorrow once.

I was anxious to secure a small writing-desk, and a friend of mine desired to sell me hers. It wasn't a new one, and a little the worse for wear. I asked her the price, and her answer was quite a common one: "We won't dispute as to that; 'twill be all right." But, when settling day came, I found she charged me five dollars, when I could have procured a bran-new one for half that sum. I didn't begrudge the money, but I did not like to be taken advantage of, and from that time forth, I never made any bargain without a clear, direct and plain understanding, and I've found I haven't cheated half as much as I used to be.

I will take him to Illinois and show him farming upon a scale which will seem beyond belief to the sturdy mountaineers of New England. And I will tell him how an Indiana lady recently went to take the chair of music in one of the largest Eastern colleges.

And I will tell him, too, how an Eastern man lately took the Presidency of one of our Western colleges, which was declining, and by his great name was going to save it from ruin. But his great name did not avail, for the college went steadily down, and a few weeks ago it "busted up," as the boys say, and no longer exists.

But we love our Eastern brethren very dearly. Ah, yes, we have only the friendliest thoughts and kindest emotions for them, and if sometimes we have to give them a stinging little rap, it is only to teach them that we of the West must be somewhat respected, too, and there is no need to interrupt friendly feelings on that score.

"Then swell the loud chorus again!

"Huzzah! for the land we love best!

"Tis the land of savanna and plain,

"Tis the land, 'tis the land of the West!"

I will show him physicians and surgeons whose skill will readily undertake the most intricate and dangerous operations; lawyers who are qualified to stand at any bar; professors and teachers who could hold their own with any on the other side of the mountains; and merchants and mechanics whose commercial enterprises are little behind those of the East—if they are behind at all.

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MATTIE DYER BRITTON.

NOTE BY THE EDITOR.—What our correspondent says is very true, and the fact that right here in New York city, the Western men are a power in journalism and current literature is confirmation strong of the influence which the West has in developing representative mind. Whitelaw Reid, an Ohio man, conducts the *New York Tribune* with John Hays, an Illinois man, is "leader" writer. W. P. Howells, an Ohio man, conducts the *Atlantic Monthly*, to which Bret Harte, a California man, is a special contributor. And so the record runs. It is stated that twenty-two of our best Metropolitan journalists are from Ohio!

DANDYISM.

ORDINARY people have little idea of the labor and care requisite in reaching that stage of development aimed at by our sprouting manhood of to-day. Dandyism is neither an inherent condition, nor one attained without a remarkable combination of perseverance, ambition and natural ability.

There's a mistaken idea prevalent, I know, that an abundance of broadcloth, snowy, fine linen with the gloss given it by the laundress uncontaminated by any such precious consideration as money value given in return, perfumed handkerchiefs, kids irreproachable, mustache with the proper kind, neckties, brilliants, and unpaid bills *ad infinitum*, are the needful accessories in the make-up of a model dandy; but more, when you are making a bargain.

Certain fine essences of gentility are desirable, though not indispensable, as shown by some of our most successful specimens of the article, springing from the very heart of the trades or of mechanical invention. It is noticeable, however, that these invariably repudiate their plebeian origin, or admit only to deprecate it; consequently it may be inferred that the fine essences take the form of natural qualities with them, and after all are neither lacking nor sapped from some far-off aspiring branch on the genealogical tree.

Art, fine art, is an essential point in the culture of dandyism. It requires the art of cultivating a set expression of countenance between the "prunes, prisms, and persimmons" of school-girl practice, and the wide-awake air of a gentlemanly bandit, as seen by the footlights—a composite element of rakish precision and devil-may-care fastidiousness, extremely difficult to arrive at; it requires the art of saying, "aw," "weeley," "extraordinary," "pon my soul and honow" in a manner which may indicate that the expressions contain a variety of hidden and subtle reasons not discernible in their mere forms; it includes the art of love-making in every shade and form short of actual communism. It embraces a greater variety of dodges in evading creditors, who have so little sympathy with the sublime element of dandyism as to become importunate regarding those little I O U's than when you are making a bargain.

Dandyism is the course they must travel; but the glory of dandyism bears them over the bleakness of the way, and they are set shining stars in the firmament of young manhood's endeavor.

J. D. B.

A WORD FOR THE WEST.

Not long since I received a letter from an editor for whom I had written a little, in which he said: "How is it possible you have developed so much journalistic talent living in the *terras incognitas* of the backwoods of Indiana?"

Now I don't mean to call names, for this good editor is away up at the top of the literary stars which we little ones below are making such stumbling efforts to climb—if he chances to read these paragraphs, he will know I mean him—and I take his commendation as about the highest compliment my poor little wife has ever received, and I thank him most earnestly and gratefully.

But, at the same time, I feel like hitting him a friendly tap with my pen for expressing surprise that there should be any talent "in the backwoods of Indiana," and, I suppose, in the West generally, as compared with the East.

Well, why not? Is the West—is Indiana, Nazareth? And can no good thing come out of it?

Now, I am not, myself, very much in love with Indiana. I do not think the climate healthy, nor the scenery—except in a few favored spots—any thing to brag on. But "the people—ah, the people!"—I won't hear a word against them!

I shall lift up my lance whenever and wherever anybody flouts the people of Indiana, or of the whole West.

"The West" is a large country, a great country. It is favorable to the development of large hearts, large brains, large experiences. It seldom produces any thing on a very small scale—abundance and luxuriance are its predominating characteristics, and the mass of the people compare favorably with the same classes of any other portion of the country, or of any country on the face of the earth.

The people of the West think as much, reason as much, talk as much, yes, and write as much, as the people of the East. Ask the editors of any of the principal literary journals where the majority of their writers come from, and see what they will tell you. Ask Mr. Beadle, for instance, and he will point you away out as far as the "wilds of Missouri," to show you one of his most gifted contributors. And others will go clear across on the plains of Colorado and California and show you men and women who live in the "backwoods," and yet have brains! And who possess "intellectual talent" which would be an honor to any publication or any State.

This kind, generous, but slightly-mistaken editor has been pleased to compliment my simple skill; but if he will go with me to the "backwoods" city of Indianapolis, I will present him to a whole circle of bright stars before whose radiance this poor little farthing rushlight would go out entirely.

If he will visit the churches in some of our towns and villages, I will show him in their pulpits men whose sound, logical reasoning, whose clear, forcible, practical style of argument, are a credit, and an honor, and an ornament, both to their pulpits and their profession.

I would give very little for the character of a man who could read a certain almanac of a very funny fellow without smiling

once, or expressing some sympathetic satisfaction over the side-splitting outbursts of fun in which the author indulges.

I believe if tears are good as a safety-valve, and as an expression of deep feeling, laughter is excellent as a tonic. It will drive away care, invigorate and rejoice.

As the poet says:

"Love a man, laugh: he can raise

The general feeling to a joyous level;

And put to rout, with all his humorous ways,

Care, sorrow, anger, and the very devil!"

PENMAN SWIFT.

Foolscap Papers.

In Congress.

I was in Congress for thirty-two years, I think.

My memory is very good, but is not much account for dates. If you would ask me on what day I settled with my tailor for this suit of clothes, I shouldn't be able to tell you; the tailor would look over his books and say he wouldn't be able either. So much for my memory. It might have been that I *served* in Congress two years, and it might have been only two months. You see, in Congress we take no note of time—money is the object.

I was one of the most forward members there (even when I was young everybody—and his opinion is generally correct)—said I was the most forward boy he ever saw. I had the faculty of being constantly on both sides, and it takes a very smart man to do that.

I was beaten in the election, but I got into Congress through a flaw in the indictment.

I would have been Speaker of the Senate but they thought I was entirely too honest—I never having—so help me Boss Tweed—defeated in any manner myself out of a cent. This may seem egotism, but it is the honest truth, nevertheless.

For a long time I was chief of the Standing Committee on Resolutions not to drink any more—unless we were where we could get any thing to drink—and during our sittings I never made a motion unless with the purest motives—and great exertions; and I have it to say thankfully, that my constituents (I was elected by tailors) said that during all that time my career never made a stain on the face of the "Globe."

I served long and well on the Committee of Internal Refreshments. With this business we were always overcrowded—in fact, were always pretty full.

We passed every whisky bill that was presented from down town, and saved the people a very large amount of money. I haven't even to this day received sufficient credit for this.

You ask what more did I do? I will tell you. I furnished all my constituents' children with Patent-Office Reports and Presidents' Messages; I overloaded the mails with patent onion seed, and improved squash seed, and everlasting beans. I was considered to be in advance of the age, and was always in advance of my salary. I was always escorted in the Senate by the Sergeant-at-arms—length, unless it took two or three more men to find me.

While I was there there wasn't a moment passed over my head but what I was as busy as a bee.

I was at the head of the Committee on our Relations in Europe, and in our votes we were always on a (family) tie.

It was I who first proposed the bill to allow members the sum of one hundred dollars a mile for mileage, (I was at that time on the Committee of Retrenchments), allowing the members from the Eastern States to reach Washington direct by the way of San Francisco, and the members from the Western States to come by the desirable Japan route, which offered such fine facilities for long distance; also the same rate of mileage for extra walking after night, by the members, when walking was very difficult.

I introduced the bill allowing the members' washing to be franked to and from home—the deficit thus caused in the Postal receipts to be made up by additional postage on all love letters.

I once proposed a bill to allow the Government to assist me to release my house and lot from the mortgages thereon. This was objected to, and I replied with a long convincing speech that made all the members ashamed of themselves, and they got up and left. When they had all gone, I put it to a vote and carried it myself, by a majority of one.

On one occasion I rose and proposed a reduction of each member's allowance of fine-cut to two pounds per day. Mr. Alf. Tite, the member from Pigwig, said the proposition was an out-and-outrage. Here's the affair as reported in the morning papers:

"Mr. Whitehorn said if the 'onerous' Mr. Tite had no objections he might consider himself no gentleman.

Mr. T. replied that Mr. W. might consider himself another.

Mr. W. shook his clenched man-of-war fist within twenty-four feet of being right under Mr. T.'s nose, and said he had better keep still or he would introduce a bill to

AT THE BALL.

BY L. C. GREENWOOD.

The wine to the brim the goblets may fill,
And its blush o'erblushes the pallid cheeks,
The dancers may move to the music's will,
Whose motion a joy in the heart bespeaks.

The toasts may ring from the assembled fair,
And flatter the ones for whom they were meant;
The scentless flowers all placed in the hair
May falsely blush at each gaze to them sent.

The revel may last, I care not how long,
But lead me away are my heart shall break,
Oh, lead me away from the giddy throng,
To my chamber cold, my flight help me take!

One there—I can weep as long as I may,
And weep on the rose that blushed on my breast;
Yes, weep till all shadows have flown away,
Weep, while a night of tears brings no rest.

I lay down my gloves and the tear-wet rose,
The white moire antique and the jewels bright;
My handkerchief's wet and still a tear flows,
And my eyes are red from weeping all night.

"Weeping all night?" you so carelessly ask,
"I'll tell you, sister; oh, false he has proved—
False, and it pained me to see him umask,
And I bitterly wept because I am unloved."

The revel will end, and so will the joy;
That beguiles the hearts until morn's dawn;
Then the fair coquette, the gay ball-room toy,
Will find another and be find me gone.

Then, when will he miss me and look in vain,
And when the deep shades of remorse come o'er,
I can but pity his anguish and pain,
But, sister, I never can love him more!

Tracked to Death:
or,
THE LAST SHOT.BY CAPT. MAYNE REID,
AUTHOR OF "HELPLESS HAND," "LONE RANCH,"
"SCALP HUNTERS," "WHITE CHIEF," ETC.

CHAPTER XXXVII.

STALKING AMONG GRAVES.

THROUGHOUT the settlement there had been no one so zealous in the search after the body of Charles Clancy, or determined upon tracking up his assassin, as Simeon Woodley. Between him and Clancy had existed a strong feeling of friendship, such as might be expected to spring from a similarity of tastes and community of calling.

It is true the younger hunter was only an amateur in the profession, indulging in it for the pleasure it afforded; while Simeon Woodley followed it as the means of gaining a livelihood.

Notwithstanding this dissimilarity of purpose, the two had often met in the woods and joined in the pursuit of game, assisting one another in the chase, and sharing its spoils. Otherwise, Clancy, though poor, was educated, and in point of social status, acknowledged to be a gentleman; while Woodley was but a rough backwoodsman, and made no pretensions beyond.

He lived in a log cabin, wore the coarse homespun, and homewoven, cloth of the country, and maintained himself by the produce of his traps, snares, and gun. He dealt in deer and bear meat, as well as their skins; which, along with now and then, a batch of wild turkeys, he found ready sale for in the markets of Natchez.

Thus, meeting and hunting together, the two had become, if not intimate associates, at least occasional comrades, with a good-will and fellow-feeling for one another. This was strengthened by the fact, that in every part of a hunting-day's spoils Clancy was accustomed to content himself with the lesser share, leaving the larger one to his more needy comrade to help in his marketing account. These acts of generosity, done in such a way as not to make the professional hunter ashamed of the obligation, had won from him a friendship bordering on affection—in short, devotion.

Moreover, Woodley himself, though of rough, almost uncouth exterior, was of a true and loyal disposition. He was, therefore, capable of appreciating, as well as admiring, the same noble qualities in his younger associate.

Yet another lien existed between the two. They had met in Texas; Woodley having been a resident of the "Lone Star State" at the time Clancy paid his visit to it. The old hunter had but lately returned to Mississippi, the settlement near Natchez being his original place of abode, and the river bottom adjacent his former hunting-ground. He and Clancy had not only come together in Texas, but there hunted together. Still more, Woodley was one of the men who had stood by Clancy at Nacogdoches, in the scrape about the stolen horse, spoken of by Borlaase in the Choctaw Chief. What the horse-thief had confessed in his cups was most, if not all, of it true. His detention, and whipping at the post, had taken place as he described it; and Simeon Woodley was one of that same jury that passed the sentence, and saw it carried into execution.

From all this it will be seen that something more than an ordinary bond of companionship had existed between Woodley and Clancy. Hence the zeal displayed by the former in searching for the dead body of his friend, as also to discover the assassin and bring him to justice.

From that day it had never flagged. Although the murderer had been made known, been taken, and afterward escaped the punishment due to him, Simeon Woodley had not given up the hope of some day recapturing him. Nor had he ceased his search for the remains of the murdered man. He knew they must be somewhere—if not the body itself, its bones. The wolves and vultures would not eat these. Only one creature was likely to have devoured and so destroyed them as to leave no traces. This was the great saurian of the cypress swamps.

But the hunter did not believe that an aligator had anything to do with the disappearance of the body. It had been carried off soon after the moment of the murder. The sign showed this to him who could skillfully interpret it. Showed, also, that no crocodile could have been the ravisher. The reptile would have left a trail with the marks of its hand-like paws easily discernible.

To the old hunter himself the missing body, and also the absence of traces to tell why it was missing, were things to mystify him.

There were times when he had doubts about Clancy being dead. If dead, he could not for the life of him conceive what had become of the body. A corpse could not carry itself away; and who was there to have carried it? If Darke had himself removed it, then why his surprise on finding

it gone, and only the hat and gun remaining under the tree? More than mere surprise; he had shown as if stricken with awe. This Simeon Woodley, closely watching him, clearly noticed, and made note of. From that he now reasoned, and correctly, too, that Darke could not have taken the body away.

But who else could, or would? And whither had it been conveyed? Where was it?

The reason for the dog having been tied to the palmetto he understood, or thought he did. Darke had done it to prevent the animal from returning home. Even this theory was not satisfactory. Why had he looked upon Clancy living? They had parted in quick succession from his lips.

The reader will have already shaped an answer to some of these, but not all. He knows that Clancy, insensible, to all appearance dead, was carried away in the canoe of a fugitive slave; and he may also know that this slave was Ephraim Darke's abandoned field-hand, by name Jupiter. Beyond that, all will be conjecture.

There is no need its remaining so; but, to make things lucid, it is necessary to return to the canoe-man, left paddling his craft down the creek.

It was not any lack of food or drink that had tempted the runaway from his lair on the evening of Charles Clancy's attempted assassination. He had ventured forth to appease an appetite almost as strong as that of hunger or thirst. This was a hankering after news—a longing to hear them. Had Jupiter been a voluntary hermit, it might have been different. But he was nothing of the kind. In the large-bodied and well-proportioned mulatto there was not the inkling of an inclination to imitate the life of Simon Stylites. His solitude was a thing forced upon him.

On that evening he had hopes of hearing no ordinary news, but tidings to thrill the heart—even his, under a coarse cotton shirt and a yellowish skin. He expected to learn something about his sweetheart, Jule. He had already heard she was soon to leave the neighborhood; taken along with her master—going with her young mistress. He knew all about their movements, plans and purposes; when they were to go, and whence bound. He had a hope—as it was his design—of being able soon to follow them to their new home, and there once more rejoin his beloved Jule.

But he had a wish, also, to see her before their departure; and it was to arrange a meeting, through the intervention of Blue Bill, he was making that silent excursion up the creek.

The spot where he expected to find the coon-hunter was the same where he had descended from his dug-out, going on to where Clancy lay. For reasons already known, Blue Bill came not to the trysting-place; and the after incidents, so terribly tragical, drove all idea of meeting him out of the mulatto's mind.

Jule might be met at a more opportune time. Then his only thought was about giving succor to the young gentleman who had more than once befriended him. If dead, to save his body from being mutilated by wildcats and wolves; if living, to take steps for restoring it to strength.

With this intent had he taken it up, carried it to his dug-out, and then headed the rude craft toward the darkest recesses of the swamp.

With the habit of a hunter at first sight of game, Woodley at once tightened rein, determined upon watching the midnight wanderer, whose eccentric gait had given him some surprise.

Still keeping in the saddle, he saw the latter go on to the little woodland cemetery and stop by the side of a grave. He saw him bend forward, as if to read the epitaph on its painted slab, and soon after fall prostrate upon the earth, as if in prayer.

Woodley well knew the grave thus venerated. He knew that under that sod reposed the remains of Caroline Clancy; for he had himself assisted in carrying them thither and afterward smoothing the turf that covered them. He had been chiefly instrumental in erecting that frail tablet to her memory.

No wonder at his being able to distinguish the grave! Who, then, was this man, at midnight—in the chill, silent hour of midnight—flinging himself down upon it, in sorrow or adoration? Who could he be?

For a moment the backwoodsman surrendered himself to an emotion stronger than curiosity. It did not overcome his sense of mind, or hinder him from observing the caution habitual to him, as a hunter.

Instead of putting to the spur and riding straight up to the spot, he slipped softly out of the saddle, hastily tied his horse to a tree, then advanced stealthily, and with as much precision as if he had been stalking a shy stag.

Without being observed, or his presence in any way made known to him recumbent upon the grave, he succeeded in reaching the border line of the little backwoods burying-ground. There was no wall or fence around it—no inclosure of any kind—only some bushes, the straggling selvage of the adjacent woodland.

Screamed by these, the hunter crawled close up over the graves, until within less than six paces of the man whose movements mystified him, and who was still lying alone, with arms stretched over, apparently embalmed.

Woodley kept his crouching attitude as the man rose to his feet, and, standing erect, gave utterance to the oath already recited.

Hearing the strange, wild words, and seeing, under the full moonbeams, a form well known to him, but which he never expected to look upon again, the old hunter was spellbound with surprise.

It was some moments before he could recover himself and shake off the fancy of it being all a dream. But the man's face was now turned toward him, the moonlight fell fair upon it, and Woodley could not be mistaken. Despite the pallid skin and features showing emaciation—despite the hollow cheek and glaring eye—he recognized the body itself, its bones. The wolves and vultures would not eat these. Only one creature was likely to have devoured and so destroyed them as to leave no traces. This was the great saurian of the cypress swamps.

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Had he been dead, and was now come to life again? Or only half dead, and had recovered? Which?

And where had he been during the days of his disappearance? In what secret spot had he been hidden, to have baffled the keenest search for him? And why had he hidden himself? Why kept away?

These and other like interrogations had rushed into the head of the old hunter as he looked upon Clancy living. They had partied in quick succession from his lips.

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even unto the death. Think not that I speak boastingly, lady, for I count empty words as less than air, unless backed by deeds; but Gilbert, the Mustanger, can say with truth that he never yet turned his back to friend or foe."

"I fully believe you, for even your enemies do not count you as one within whose veins runs the blood of a coward."

Again the voice sounded strangely familiar to the ears of the Mustanger, but the gloom of the night was so dense that he could not have traced the lineaments of her face, even if it had been uncovered. The black eyes alone shone through the darkness.

"You know that you have enemies?" the woman said, after a slight pause.

"Yes."

"And you guess who they are?"

"Yes, again."

"You can name them?"

"For the third time, yes."

"Do so, and I may be able to tell you whether you guess the truth or not."

"Fair and softly, lady!" cried the Mustanger, lightly. "You forget that you are a stranger who seeks my confidence under the cover of night. How can I tell who you may be? The inhabitants of this fair and sunny land are noted for their cunning lures. May not you be an agent of these bold and powerful enemies of mine, seeking by a show of warning to win my confidence and so betray me to the men who seek my life?"

"Oh, senor, you can not think that!" exclaimed the woman, her voice choked by emotion, and her dark eyes filled with tears. For the first time, too, she spoke in her natural tones; in her anguish forgetting the necessity of disguising her identity.

The Mustanger started in surprise. The wild suspicion that had taken possession of his mind, as to who and what his strange visitor was, was truth; and the knowledge thrilled his heart with joy, and made the life-blood leap lightly in his veins.

"Think if any one should discover my presence here at this hour, what utter ruin it would be to me. Even now I shudder when I think of the terrible risk that I have run to warn you. You will never know who I am, but you must guess that there must be some powerful motive which has urged me to this wild and unwomanly step. That motive I speak frankly, it is to save your life. Do not ask why I should concern myself regarding you, a stranger to me; that is my secret and must remain so; only believe that I am a true and faithful friend to you."

"I do believe it, upon my soul," said the Mustanger, earnestly.

"Listen then: you have two powerful enemies; first, Ponce de Bandera; second, Ferdinand Tordilla. Both think that you are an obstacle in their way; neither one will hesitate at any moment to remove you from it. Oh, if you could only know the pain it gives me to speak these words. To give you this warning I am compelled to betray one who has ever been kind and good to me."

"I partly guess your secret, lady," the young man said, slowly.

The woman shuddered in alarm; her face was convulsed with anguish, but the friendly gloom concealed her agitation.

"Do not try to guess it!" she cried quickly and in wild alarm. "I should perish with shame to be discovered by you. Never until now have I fully realized how wild, how desperate, how unwomanly is this act of mine. Oh! pledge my honor that you will never attempt to discover who or what I am."

"Willingly; but, lady, I will not deceive you, who have risked so much for me; I know who you are."

"Oh, holy mother, save me!" cried the woman, wringing her hands, in anguish.

"Do not fear; never to mortal will I betray your secret," the Mustanger cried, quickly.

"But, it is not that? What will you think of me? I have acted so unwomanly—like one utterly without shame," she moaned.

"What will I think of you?" questioned the American, repeating her words. "Why, that you are the best and bravest girl in all this great world, for you have dared for me as women only dare for those they love."

The arm of the Mustanger was around the slight waist of the girl, and her head sunk unresistingly down upon his broad chest.

"I should never have dared to have told my passion; to have breathed the hope that I had dared to dream that I should one day win you for my own, bright, beautiful girl that you are. You are a flower more fitted to bloom in golden halls than to share the wild life of a poor adventurer such as I am."

"I love you, and to me you are a king," the girl murmured, softly, clinging tightly to the bosom of her lover.

"For your sake, I will try and be one," he said, passionately.

Then he bent down his head and touched the white forehead of the girl with his lips; then soft arms twined around his neck; then, lip to lip, and soul to soul, the Mustanger claimed his bride!

What earthly joy like a pure woman's kiss.

"Sho! Wa-at, oh, git out!"

Crockett stood within the room, a lighted candle in his hand.

With a half-scream, Giraldita—for it was the pret Mexican girl who had thus sought her lover beneath the cover of the night—hid herself in her lover's bosom. Gilbert held her tightly to his breast, trying to shield her from recognition.

The attempt was useless, for the keen eyes of the hunter had detected who the girl was that Gilbert held within his arms.

"Why on earth didn't you say somethin'?" cried Crockett, preparing to back out.

"How in thunder could I tell? It's all right, señorita; don't you be scared; I kin keep my mouth shut. I'm Gil's side-partner, an' tougher than an old he-b'ar."

Crockett backed into the inner room and the lovers were once more in the darkness and alone.

"Did your friend recognize me?" Giraldita asked, earnestly.

"I think so, but be under no alarm; he is a true friend to me and would freely risk his life at any time in my behalf."

"But, Gilbert, do you not think that I have acted unwomanly in seeking you at such an hour?" Giraldita murmured.

"Love and the circumstances excuses all," he replied.

"I did not know how else to warn you; I might have sent my maid, a peon girl, named Inez, but I feared that she might blunder, and so betray my secret."

"Twas heaven's thought that sent you

on this quest, for it has revealed to us the secret of our hearts. But you will let me see you again?" he asked, imploringly.

"Yes; I can trust Inez to bear a message; and now, adios!"

Again their lips met, and then Gilbert stood alone in the gloom.

CHAPTER XXI.

THE AMBUSH.

THE ruined mission-house by the Segó; the walls overgrown with wild climbing vines, and the little court-yard filled with noxious weeds. Without the walls the prairie flowers grew thick, but within, the dark weeds had gained the mastery.

First, the native wilderness decked with the gay flowers, then the curbing hand of civilization with the grain and fruit destined for man's support, and then the dark and noxious weeds.

So ever in this life; man restraining free nature must needs leave some baneful influence behind.

A dozen paces from the ruined house, half concealed by the tall grass that grew around it, was a well; visible evidence of the thoughtful care of the "good fathers," for often in the hot summer time the Segó ran sanguinely and the fever seeds of death lurked within the yellow waters.

Strong and massive was the stone coping that hemmed in the mouth of the well; the sides, too, were carefully banked with massive stones brought by patient peons to fill the dark ravines of the Rio Sabinal.

But desolation's withering hand had been ruthlessly laid on the mission-well as on the mission-house. The stone curb was wanting here and there; the great stones either laid by the side of the well on the prairie, covered from sight by the rank grass, or else had tumbled to the bottom.

The well, too, was dry now; dark-leaved plants, born half of earth, half of water, struggled for existence down in the gloom of the pit, hid from the sunlight, very cut-offs from the rest of their world.

The sun was high in the heavens, and the morning breeze rustled the prairie flowers, while the White Indians rode down the bank of the Segó, approaching the ruined house from the north.

A good half-mile from the house they halted.

The band were all there, mounted on wiry mustangs, Michael Dago, the chief of the three, Jose, the red-skinned half-breed, and Pepe, the Mexican snake.

"Now the question is has our game come or not?" said Dago.

"That is easily found out!" cried Pepe, quickly. "He will come on horseback, and as he comes from Dhanis will approach from the south. From here we have a clear view of the river for two miles, at least, southward. I will scout into the ruins. I can easily discover whether any one has been there or not by the presence or absence of horse's hoofs. If he has not come, let us picket the horses in that clump of timber—" and the speaker pointed to a little prairie island some half-mile inland from the river—" and then conceal ourselves in the tall grass by the ruins. When he descends into the well, we can easily finish him."

"Good!" cried Dago; "Pepe has the gift of speech, and makes up by length of tongue what he lacks in strength of hands."

Pepe grinned at the compliment.

"But dismount and examine whether our prey has come or not, and Jose and myself will take the horses to the timber."

Pepe dismounted and proceeded on his mission, while the other two rode onward to the prairie island, leading Pepe's horse with the caution of the red chief stealing in upon a sleeping foe.

A wide circle he made to the south around the ruins, and then came again to the river.

Closely and carefully he examined every foot of ground that he passed over, but the search was in vain; the morning dew was still fresh upon the flowers, and no mustang's hoof had trampled the waving grass to the ground.

"Caramba!" cried Pepe, in glee; "no living thing has trod this way since daybreak, I am sure. We are in time, then, and shall earn our ounces easily."

When the Mexican made this remark he had little idea what an opponent he and his brothers were destined to find in Lope, the panther.

Pepe, returning with the same caution that he came, joined the other two.

They had left the horses concealed in the timber, and found an ambush in the tall grass just beyond the ruins.

Lying down at full length upon the earth, the three were concealed from sight by the tall prairie grass.

"Well?" questioned Dago, as Pepe rejoined them.

"No sign of beast or man," replied the other.

"He has not come, then; good, we are in time," the leader of the outlaws said, in a tone of great satisfaction.

"How shall we proceed? spring upon him the moment he dismounts?" asked Jose.

"And stand a chance of getting a bullet through the body!" growled Dago. "Caramba, no! Did you not hear what the senor said? This man is used to arms, and will sell his life dearly if we give him a chance."

"Better wait until he descends into the well, then dispatch him," Pepe suggested.

"That's the plan; no risk; that's what I like," Dago said, complacently.

"Suppose he should discover our presence here by some accident, and fly without damage?" Jose asked.

"That is not likely," Dago replied. "We are to the north of the well, while he comes from Dhanis from the south. He will ride straight up the bank of the river; there is no other way. Unless he has the scent of the deer, he will never discover us, ambushed here like snakes in the grass."

"Besides, why should he expect that any one should lie in wait for him?" Pepe observed, shrewdly. "I was careful to leave no tracks behind me when I crept in toward the well. The precautions I took would baffle the eye of a Comanche."

"That is in truth," Dago cried. "Look well to the priming of your pistols. When he descends into the well, we'll creep toward it, and rain such a shower of bullets down upon his head, that he'll think the day of judgment has come with leaden hail."

"Hush!" cried Pepe, suddenly, bending his ear close to the earth.

"Well?"

"I hear the sound of a horse's hoofs."

The three listened intently.

The quick ears of the Snake had not deceived their master. A horse was approaching at a round gallop.

"It must be our man!" cried Dago, in the ears of the others.

Carefully the three examined their weapons, lying motionless as logs upon the ground.

The sound of the hoofs came nearer and nearer.

Pepe lifted his head and peered cautiously through the waving grass.

The sound of the hoofs strokes countering upon the virgin soil of the prairie, had ceased. The rider had evidently halted.

Pepe, watching from the ambush, saw an iron-gray mustang, surmounted by a tall and muscular rider, standing by the side of the mission-well.

Carefully the rider gazed around him. North, south, east and west went the gaze of his searching eyes. No wily savage, watching for trace of an ambushed foe, could scan the prairie more carefully.

Pepe caught but a glimpse of the horseman, and then, fearing discovery, crouched again to earth.

"What is he doing?" asked Diego, in a whisper.

"He has halted by the side of the well and is looking around as if he feared that some one was watching him," the Snake replied.

"He fears lest some one should be near to dispute the hidden gold of the mission-priest with him," muttered the chief of the outlaws, with a smothered chuckle.

"The old well is more apt to prove his grave than his treasure-house," Jose growled, hoarsely.

"Right, comrade, and we'll be the mourners," Dago said, with a grin on his coarse features.

"And his heirs too; only the ladronc looks as if he hadn't two copper-pieces to chink together," Pepe remarked.

"Look again, Pepe, and see what he is doing," Dago said.

The Snake obeyed the order.

Cautiously he lifted up his head and peered through the green blades.

The mustang still stood by the side of the well, but the horseman had disappeared.

Pepe communicated the intelligence to his comrades.

"He has descended into the well, then," Dago said.

"It is probable," replied the Snake.

"The time for action has come; vamos!"

The three rose from their ambush, pistol in hand, stole in toward the well.

CHAPTER XVII.

THE PANTHER'S TEETH.

With the cautious tread of tigers the three advanced.

The gray mustang, hopped in the Mexican fashion with the lariat attached to the fore-legs, was lazily cropping the grass by the side of the well.

As the three men approached, the horse raised his head and looked at them; the ears laid backward and the outstretched muzzle showed that the beast was alarmed; the eyes rested at last upon the stone coping of the well; that coping, that in its gaps here and there, showed the marks of time's destroying hand.

The face of the Mexican lighted up. He had found the allies that he sought.

"Voto!" he cried, in triumph; "I have it!"

"The plan to kill yonder beggar?" asked Dago, with an anxious air.

"Yes; you see that a stone here and there is wanting? Let us push the rest of the stones into the well on top of this demon!"

"Good! he will be crushed to death!" cried the chief of the outlaws in fierce glee.

"It is easily done. See, the stones on this side are all loose," and Pepe pointed to the coping.

With fierce joy written on their savage features, the three proceeded to their task.

Shoulder to shoulder the white Indians knelt by the stone wall.

A single mighty effort they made; the small stones that filled up the crevices between the large one went down in a cloud of dust into the well. A moment the massive boulders trembled on the edge, and then they, too, fell into the chasm.

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The girl then left him alone and went to her aunt, who was in the sitting-room, sewing, to tell her that a stranger had pleased to call; but not having told her relative about the predicted husband, she, to win her aunt's consent to his staying, and touch her charity, said to her, in a tone of petition:

"Auntie! a poor, weary, wayfaring sailor begs a bite o' bread an' a bed for the night."

"Tak' him in, lassie, an' attend ta his wants; the Lord has been pleased ta gie us a guid share of his bounty, sa we munna be selfish, but should divide wi' a' he sends ta our door," was the religious old dame's reply.

Thus did the spae-wife's grandson succeed in receiving a kind reception in the house, whose young hostess' hand and fortune he intended to win by playing at ease the part the old soothsayer had arranged for his acting.

Ingratiating himself into the maiden aunt's good graces and confidence by a recital of the harrowing sufferings and dangers, he soon had the satisfaction of seeing her retire to bed, leaving the coast clear for him to lay siege to the fair niece's heart.

In a solemn, sentimental tone of voice, he began to tell the guileless girl a strange story, of how a little spirit-bird had whispered in her ear, when aloft one night at sea, that he would find shelter on shore in a certain cottage, where, expected, he would be received by a pretty young miss, named Jessie Stuart; and how this same girl, congenial to him, would wed with him in heartfelt love and enjoy with him a long and happy companionship.

This well-told tale of fabrication raised the credulous girl to the highest pitch of excitement; throwing herself in the sailor's arms, she confessed for him a fond affection and believing, by the faithful fulfillment of the prophecy, 'twas the will of the Fates that she should be her future husband, she readily consented to an early nuptial.

With mutual agreement and arrangement they then, allowing the lapse of time for the lawful marriage-cry on two consecutive Sabbaths at the neighboring village kirk, appointed a certain night on which she should meet him clandestinely at a given place and hour, when in a close carriage they would be conveyed to the minister's house and have the ceremony performed; after which, being duly made man and wife, they would return home, and informing the old lady, take formal possession of the property to settle down.

To seal this contract they affectionately kissed, and bidding each other good-night, retired. A man's figure then quietly withdrew from the shrubbery near the window, and with slow step walked away.

"Twas a dark and dreary night as Jessie Stuart, wrapped in a large plaid, unknown to her aunt, crept out of her bedroom window, and avoiding the roads, crossed hurriedly over the fields to the place of tryst.

Finding no one there and no signs of any one's coming, after waiting a few moments that to her were as hours, her heart began to beat impetuously in doubtful impatience, and the solemn hush of silence threw over her a spell of fearful suspense; but soon the distant rumbling sound of carriage-wheels caught her ear, and radiant hope in a fond flash lit up her eyes as she descended a vehicle loom up out of the dense darkness.

It stopped suddenly before her, and a man she saw had a straw hat on stepped out. Not waiting for further surely of her right man, she sprung into his arms, and lifted into the coach, not a word being spoken, with her silent companion was swiftly borne away, and in a few minutes landed before the prepared parson's house.

Handed out, she went into the parlor and took a seat, while her lover stayed at the door to give orders to the driver and make some preliminary arrangements with the minister.

Soon the groom and the reverend gentleman entered together. Then, for the first time, as she saw him in the light, Jessie noticed how tidily different her lover looked from the way he had when she saw him last, but, supposing he had altered his appearance a little for the occasion, she arose and received an introduction to the Doctor of Divinity.

This worthy then proceeded therewith to make one the willing pair who stood before him, and after reading the usual chapter from the Bible, turning to put the proper questions to the man, addressed him as Alexander Macpherson.

Jessie started as she heard this name, but remembering she had never known the sailor's, she thought by some strange coincidence his must be the same as her late discarded lover's.

The ceremony went on, and, with the signing of the paper, was soon concluded; then the future husband and wife bidding the parson good-night, got into the coach again and was whirled away.

"Darin' wife!" said the man, as soon as they were seated snugly in the "we'll stop at the village inn an' ha'e some refreshments before we gang home."

"Very weel, Aleck, just as ye like," she answered, lovingly.

So when the carriage rolled up to a small hotel, they alighted, and arm in arm, went in at the public entrance.

As the bride stepped inside of the door she gave a sudden shriek and sunk back in the arms of her husband.

There, stretched out on the floor, in a senseless state of intoxication, lay the besotted sailor whom she supposed she had just been married to!

Looking up into her supporter's face, the wife asked, in a tone of appeal:

"What means this?"

"There lies the brute o' a man ta whom ye were to ha'e been tied for life had not I saved ye!" answered her savior, affectionately.

She buried her face on his shoulder, and between her sobs said, brokenly:

"Oh, Aleck! it is ye! How I ha'e wronged ye! Can ye forgive me?"

"I da, darlin' wif! Denna cry any more!" he replied, cheerfully, and, seeing the stir they were creating, said: "Come, lassie, we are attractin' attention, sa let us gang ta a private room!"

She turned to obey, and shuddering as she gave a passing glance at the shocking sight, was led to a reserved chamber.

There, on a *lèse-a-tete*, with her head resting confidently on her husband's bosom, she heard the following story:

On calling to see if the prophesied husband had come to hand, Aleck had listened to the two talking, to overhear the ridiculous tale related by the sailor, with the passionate ending and arranged elopement.

Knowing the seaman to be a sotish scoun-

drel, the grandson of the fortune-telling hog, who had prejudiced his girl against him, he resolved to thwart their well-laid scheme and save their silly dupe.

To this purpose he kept silence till the night appointed, when, getting several of his friends to engage the sailor's attention with his dear beloved drink, he himself, having had his beard cut off, went to take his place by the beloved bride, succeeding admirably, as has been seen.

Thus, with fond forgiveness and a happy renewal of their early vows, concluded the "Lover's Intrigue."

How He Won Her.

BY CAPT. CHARLES HOWARD.

WITH the last Congressional excursion to the Far West went pretty Meta Holbrook, daughter of the honorable member from M—. After viewing the Rocky Mountains, the distinguished excursionists concluded to go to Fort Waxley—as we will term the station—which stood in the center of the great buffalo country. It was the intention of the party to enjoy a hunt of the noble animal before turning their faces eastward.

Quite a number of fair ladies accompanied the honorable members from our great chain of States; but Meta Holbrook was the fairest of the fair. None disputed her claims to this enviable title.

Meta was enraptured with the thought of going to Fort Waxley. Her father wondered at this; but did not question her. He did not dream that Meta's lover, a young man wearing the army blue and a lieutenant's bars, was stationed there. Yet such was the fact. Unbeknown to her parents, Meta had encountered the young and handsome officer in the gay capital of the nation, and loved him, for he was worthy of all the love she had to bestow upon one of the opposite sexes.

When the excursionists reached the fort, Lieutenant Seymour was greatly surprised, but rejoiced beyond description, to behold the object of his adoration in the wilds of the Great West.

"You have arrived just in the nick of time," said the commandant, addressing Senator Judson. "But this morning our scouts reported a splendid herd of buffalo almost within sight."

"Then we will open the ball to-morrow, major," was the reply, and so it was decided that on the coming day the grand hunt would take place.

The *fête* dawned mild and cloudless, and in high glee the hunters rode from the fort. Some of the women—those who were greatly fatigued with their long journey—remained in the fort; but Meta Holbrook, seated upon a beautiful white horse, cantered over the prairie at the side of Harry Seymour, her soldier lover.

At the suggestion of several experienced hunters that a "buffalo surround" would please the distinguished excursionists, it was agreed that the shaggy-headed monarch of the plains should be hunted in that manner.

A brief description of the "surround" may not prove uninteresting to the reader, and the digression, which bears upon our story, will be pardoned.

A "buffalo surround" is effected by a large party of hunters riding to a great distance, deploying themselves into a circle around the herd and then galloping inward with loud yells. The animals thus attacked and, are easily driven into a close-packed mass, around the edge of which the mounted hunters wheel and deliver their fire.

The "surround" is often attended with danger, "for," adds our authority, "the infuriated bulls rush upon the horses and gore them to death, and the hunters, who dismounted, run a narrow risk of meeting with the same fate."

Without difficulty our hunters completed the "surround," and the order was given to gallop inward.

Meta kept close to the lieutenant's side.

Presently the animals were driven into a dense mass, around which the party galloped.

"Can you not bring that noble fellow down, Harry?" cried Meta, pointing to the leader of the herd.

"I can try, Meta," the young officer answered, bringing his carbine to his shoulder.

"Now do not fail," she said, in a low tone, as her lover was taking deliberate aim.

He did not reply; but the next moment sent a ball at the great beast. A quiver was seen to pass over the buffalo, but he did not fall.

"I hit him, Meta," said Harry, disappointed, "but not fatally. I hope to bring him to earth this time. I shall certainly—My God!"

Well might the exclamation part his lips, and the color desert his cheeks, for the infuriated bull was rushing upon them! He discharged two shots in rapid succession at the king; but the leaden pellets glanced from the thick forehead as though it were protected by a steel plate. The remainder of the party saw the couple's danger, and spurred their horses toward the fatal spot.

Suddenly the buffalo slightly altered his course and dashed straight at Meta, whose gaudy garments had attracted his attention. The young girl's presence of mind did not desert her when she comprehended her peril, and her first impulse was to wheel and seek safety in flight.

The fire flamed up vividly for a moment, and sent the shadows skurrying into the further corners of the room.

"I'll go to bed," she said, rising. "It will never do to sit here. I must look to-morrow, for Max is coming home."

She lifted the goblet of water from the stand and drank it to the last drop.

"How brackish it tastes!" she said, setting the goblet down. "It has stood so long that the bad air of this close room has tainted it."

frame, he sent a second bullet home. Suddenly the huge beast paused, and Harry saw that death was approaching. A third ball completed the death-work, and darting forward, he snatched Meta from her perilous position before the buffalo touched the ground.

The anxious spectators hailed his return with cheers, and the herd, which had been held back by the united efforts of the party, was permitted to depart without further molestation. Meta recovered from her perilous position before the buffalo touched the ground.

The maid hurried away, but came back almost immediately with a terribly frightened face.

"What is it?" cried Mrs. Brent, startled at the girl's appearance.

"Boy, she is yours; you won her."

A Ghost at the Wedding.

BY E. E. REXFORD.

I.

THE room was half in shadow. A fire leaped and flickered in the grate, throwing strange and fanciful gleams of ruddy light across the pictures on the wall, and the woman sitting in the crimson arm-chair before it, with her long, yellow hair unbound, and hanging like a golden mist about her shoulders.

She was a very beautiful woman. You could see that in the soft twilight that filled the room. Her bare arms were rounded and soft, her face was full of delicate traces of refinement and high-born grace. Her eyes were half hidden under long and drooping lashes, but you would have guessed that they were of violet-blue. No other eyes would have suited that fair, beautiful face and yellow hair.

She was thinking; you could have told by the little ripples of light that came and went when the fire blazed up brighter than usual, then died away, that her thoughts were pleasant ones, for a smile hovered about her mouth and in her eyes.

"He will be back to-morrow," she said, softly, running her fingers through the meshes of her yellow hair, with her pansy eyes seeing bright visions in the fire-light. "Dear Max! I think no better man ever lived than my husband. How happy we shall be in the years to come!"

What was it that came gliding softly in at the door, and lingered in the shadows? It was a woman in black, with hard, glittering eyes, that gleamed like coals of fire when the flames shot up vividly, or was it a shadow born out of other shadows? It must have been a shadow. The woman in the crimson arm-chair heard nothing. The head, with its wealth of yellow hair, fell back against the crimson lining of the arm-chair, and the soft, regular breathing told she was dead.

"We have been married almost a year," she said, talking to herself in a low, dreamy way, her eyes still seeing pleasant visions in the fire, her fingers still absently thudding themselves through her luxuriant hair. "Almost a year. It has been a very happy year, the happiest year I ever knew."

The shadow stirred, and half separated itself from the other shadows about it. Then it drew back and was still again.

The clock upon the mantel ticked on, and the fire died down lower and lower, and the room grew dimmer and darker. Presently the lashes fell again on the soft cheeks and hid the violet-blue eyes completely. The head, with its wealth of yellow hair, fell back against the crimson lining of the arm-chair, and the soft, regular breathing told that the woman was asleep.

Then the shadow glided softly and silently out from among the other shadows, and came closer to the unconscious sleeper. The fire flickered up behind the glistening bars of its grate, and laughed a low, hissing laugh, and mocked at the shadow standing by the arm-chair.

The shadow turned and glided away, but came back presently. A goblet, half filled with water, stood upon the little stand beside the arm-chair. Over this the shadow held a paper, from which a gray dust dropped and mingled itself with the fluid.

"Drink," the shadow whispered, bending over the sleeper, whose face was as full of innocence as a child's, "drink—and sleep—and may the sleep that draught will bring you—be full of pleasant dreams."

And then the shadow glided away, and the fire flickered up behind the glistening bars of its grate, and laughed a low, hissing laugh, and mocked at the shadow standing by the arm-chair.

"Cecile!" cried the shadow, falling down upon his knees beside his dead wife. "I have come back to you. Speak to me! Answer me!"

But the pale lips never unclosed to give him welcome.

II.

THE strains of the "Wedding March" from "Midsummer Night's Dream" floated through the long aisle, and rung among the lofty arches of the Church of the Redeemer.

"They are coming," whispered one woman to another. "How beautiful the bride looks! I remember exactly how Cecile Carnavon looked in her bridal white, when she was married to Max Brent two years ago. She resembled a lily, and this one looks like a tropic passion-flower. It's sad to think how terrible a death poor Cecile met—with so terrible because it was so sudden, and she was so young and beloved. I wonder how he ever came to select this woman for his second wife! She is the opposite of Cecile in every way. I don't like her face, at all."

The bridal party swept up the aisle, Isabel Garcia's eyes were full of triumph and exultation, the silver and cut-glass sparkled in the keen October sunlight, and the fire leaped and crackled in the grate, behind its burnished bars, as merrily as any fire need to.

The breakfast-room had but one occupant as yet. Mrs. Brent was the first one down this morning.

"I wonder what makes them so late?" she said, rising and touching the bell. "The toast will be spoiled, and the muffins, too."

The door opened directly, and a young woman entered; a tall woman, with a dark, Spanish face, and keen, brilliant eyes of intense blackness. There was a certain kind of beauty in her gipsyish face, but it was hard and cold.

The score of rifles were instantly lowered, and the old hunters spurred their steeds after the buffalo and his beautiful rider. But Harry Seymour, who had remounted with loaded carbine, distanced every one, and, after a long chase, found himself alongside of the beast. He saw that Meta had swooned, and would soon fall beneath the hard hoofs to be trampled to death.

Quick as thought the young officer drove a ball just behind the fore-shoulder, and as a deathly tremor shook the buffalo's

"You are late this morning, but Cecile is more tardy than you are! Did you hear her as you came down?"

"I did not," answered Isabel. "I knocked at her chamber-door, but there was no reply. I concluded she had come down."

"She has not been down this morning,"

answered Mrs. Brent. "Louise," to a servant who entered to replenish the fire, "go up to Cecile's room, and tell her that we are waiting breakfast for her."

The maid hurried away, but came back almost immediately with a terribly frightened face.

"What is it?" cried Mrs. Brent, startled at the girl's appearance.

"Boy, she is yours; you won her."

There was no reply.

She touched the woman's face; it was indeed cold as ice, as the maid had said.

"My God!" cried Mrs. Brent, "she is dead!"

She staggered back against the wall, and would have fallen had not Isabel, who had just entered the room, caught her.

"What has frightened you so?" Isabel asked.

"Is Cecile ill?"

"She is dead," gasped Mrs. Brent.

"

THE FIRST OF APRIL.

A poem found in the trunk of Miles Standish.

BY JOE JOY, JR.

All hail this great and glorious day
Ye firste of Aprile hight,
That cometh only once a year,
And bringeth much delight,
And playeth much tomfoolery
On many a luckless wight.

It is the day when merriment
Forth breaks into a roar,
And gentle folks can now be fools no more,
With no' no' merriment,
And those who have been fools for long
Can now be fools no more.

In sooth it is a goodly sight
As one would wish to see
To watch ye pranks ye people playe
On others with much glee,
And have a joke played upon you
As mean as mean can be.

See you aged file, his way along
How carefully he picks,
An aged hat lies in his path,
He lifts his foot and kicks,
But oh! ye know walls him sought—
A wall of his own!

But on one leg he forward goes,
Ye other badly lamed,
His jumps have much agilitate—
His hurt is not shammed;
He says, "Ye bloody urchins,
I'd like to see them d—ashed."

See you sedate old banker-man!
He slyly turns about
And grabs a package tied with sand;
Ye say, "What's this?"
He findeth he has been taken in,
And quickie he lighteth out.

Watch you young man who carves a swell:
He has an easy minde,
Ye people all they smile on him,
For which he thinks them kinde
But 'tis in consequence of that
Old ragger pin'd behind.

Lads hit themselves on questes sent—
To milliners for maps,
To goldsmiths for grinding-stones,
To hardware stores for caps,
For strap-on to the leatherman's,
Nor fail to get ye straps!

All halfe first of Ap-e-rlie!
It is so full of hoax,
It makes such little bits of foole,
Of many great bigge folks,
And bringeth much fune to all
Save ye who catch ye jokers!

Fairy Stories.

The White Serpent.

IN TWO PARTS.—PART I.

THE old king of Dunnnowar believed himself to be a great deal wiser, not only than any of his subjects, but than any king who had ever before reigned in Dunnnowar. Of course, having this belief, you may be sure he was a hard-headed old stupid.

One day he took it into his royal noddle that he would banish the fairies from his kingdom. The fairies had always lived in Dunnnowar, and had always been highly respected by the people. There were some wicked fairies among them, no doubt; but the folks believed them to be, on the whole, great blessing, and were quite proud of their fairies. They paid no taxes, however, and the king was determined that they should be banished.

So he called together his councilors and physicians and all the wise men of the kingdom to consult with him upon the matter—which meant that they should agree to what he should choose to say. They gladly came, knowing that the king would give them a grand feast.

When they had eaten and drank as much as they wanted, and were in a good humor with themselves and the king, he read to them his decree for the banishment of the fairies. The decree stated that there were not, and never had been, and never would be any such creatures as fairies, and the people of Dunnnowar were commanded, on pain of death, to cease their belief in those imaginary beings. This was his way of banishing the fairies.

The wise men grunted applause, and expressed their satisfaction in a great many words, declaring that they never would have thought of such a thing, and extolling the wonderful wisdom of the king. The king was very proud of this great act, and sat upon his throne more grandly than ever; but the people were sad and downhearted for a long time, especially the children, who greatly grieved at the loss of the fairies.

Not long after this decree was published, there came swimming across the sea (for Dunnnowar, as everybody knows, is an island), an enormous white serpent, which made great havoc in the realm of Dunnnowar, killing and swallowing the cattle, and frightening the people nearly to death.

The king gave himself much trouble about this matter, until his treasurer reported to him that the cattle were nearly all destroyed, and the people were afraid to work, and it was impossible to collect the taxes. Then he became very angry, and sent out an army to kill the white serpent.

The Generals were very wise and prudent men, having been selected by the king from among his oldest councilors. Whenever they heard of the serpent in one direction, the long roll was beat, all were called to arms, and the army was valourously marched off in exactly the opposite direction. Thus it happened that the army had not the satisfaction of encountering the serpent, and they returned to the king, when their provisions were exhausted, boasting of what they would have done if they had met the monster.

The king then issued a proclamation, offering an immense reward to whoever would kill the white serpent.

All the people of Dunnnowar, as well as the councilors, and physicians, and wise men, shook their heads when they heard this proclamation. They were not such fools as to risk their lives by running into the jaws of that enormous serpent. It had been known, they said, to swallow men alive, though there was no man in the realm who was willing to swear that it had ever swallowed *him*.

All shook their heads at the proclamation, except a gipsy blacksmith named Mozerl, a stout, handsome, black-eyed young man, who had resolved to make, in some way, a bold stroke for fortune. When he heard the proclamation, he winked and nodded his head, as much as to say, "Now I'll make my fortune, or die in trying."

It happened that there was an old fairy, who had been loth to leave the island, and had taken refuge in Mozerl's hut, where he, not having the fear of the king before his eyes, had gladly concealed and entertained her. To this fairy Mozerl went, told her of the proclamation, and asked her advice. She gave it to him, and he soon appeared before the king, and offered to kill the great white serpent.

He was laughed at by the king and his councilors, as he was armed only with a coil of twisted bull-hide rope, an ax and a jack-knife; but they did not object to his undertaking the task, thinking that the king could easily spare an ignorant gipsy.

So Mozerl went into the forest, accompanied by a few stout gipsy men, to a path that the serpent was accustomed to follow. Here, with the help of his fellows, he bent down a tall young tree, until it nearly touched the ground, and secured it there with a stout rope. He then fastened one end of his bull-hide line to the tree, and made a great slip-noose in the other end. He next tied a kid near the slip-noose, securing it in such a way that when the serpent should swallow the kid, it must pull a cord that would jerk out a peg that fastened the rope that held the tree to the ground.

Early the next morning there was a great crashing, and thrashing, and lashing about in the forest, and soon crowds of people came running to the palace to tell the king that the great white serpent was caught, hung up to a tree, and dying. The king and all his court went out to see the sight, and were just in time to witness the last struggles of the monster. They found it hung up in the air, so that it could not escape, while its great weight bent the tree nearly half-way to the ground.

"Whoever would have thought of that?" exclaimed the king, when he had made Mozerl explain how he had trapped the serpent. He gave orders that the monster should be left hanging there, as a warning to all other serpents, and was so well pleased with Mozerl, that he offered to make him Grand Baron of the Beer-cellars. Mozerl begged leave most respectfully to

So determined had become the assault,

It was not until toward the close of a long, hot August day, that I left the dusty road that had stretched out before me since sunrise, and entered the forest that reached thence to the Kentucky river. The sudden change from the glare and heat of the sun to the cool shadows that lay under the green arch overhead was most refreshing, and my tired horse seemed to appreciate the transition as much as I did, for he pricked up his ears, and very considerably mended his pace.

The region of country lying eastward of the Salt River hills, that through which I was journeying, was, at the time, but sparsely settled—so much so that it had been many hours since my eyes had rested upon even the faintest sign of civilization.

From the point where I had struck the timber to where I proposed halting for the night the distance was some two or three miles.

It was a small roadside tavern kept by one Boston Joe—why so named none knew—a noted woodman and hunter, and I had been informed, something of a desperado.

As I drew rein in front of the long, low building, I was saluted by a chorus of savage yelps and barks from half a score of gaunt hunting-hounds and curs, and for a moment thought that I would be taken bodily from the saddle, and divided piecemeal among the hungry pack.

So determined had become the assault,

It was a wild burst of laughter greeted this remarkable display of wit, and various remarks as to my appearance, etc., were freely bandied about.

"Look out fur yer hoss thar, Jake Simpson!" shouted one, pointing to a horse that was hitched some half-hundred yards off on one side of the target.

"Oh! git out! Put up a bigger center nor that. Why, he'll bust that spot all to duration!" yelled another.

"Can't git down into them sights fur them side-boards under his ears," said still another, alluding to the high, stiff collar

They were within ten feet of me, both, I then saw, carrying a heavy knife in the right hand, when I, with an effort that I did not think I could put forth, swung myself into the saddle and was off like the wind.

I was followed by, I think, the savagest volley of oaths that I have ever heard, and before I had ridden a hundred yards, I heard the peculiar ring of a bullet close to my ears, following which came the report of the second rifle that had been aimed at my life and the bag of coin within the last few minutes.

I got off with a deep scalp-wound, the villain's ball having plowed half its depth across the crown of my head for three or more inches, but I nevertheless always considered that I had earned that "pool" in a manner I would not like to repeat.

At length, allured by the rewards offered by Governor Dalling, in a proclamation dated the 12th of December, 1789, and by a resolution which followed it of the House of Assembly, two negroes, Quasher and Sam, both of Scot's Hall, Maroon Town, with a party of their townsmen, went in search of him.

Quasher, before he set out on the expedition, got himself christened, and changed his name to James Reeder. The expedition commenced, and the whole party crept about the woods for three weeks, but in vain. Reeder and Sam, tired with this mode of warfare, resolved on proceeding in search of Jack's retreat, and taking him by storming it, or perishing in the attempt. They took with them a little boy of spirit, who was a good shot, and then left the rest of the party.

Following a trail which they found among the weeds, they came upon Jack before he perceived them. He was roasting plantains by a little fire on the ground, at the mouth of a cave. It was a trying moment. Jack's looks were fierce and terrific. He told them he would kill them. Reeder, instead of shooting Jack, replied that his obi had no power to hurt him, for he was christened, and that his name was no longer Quasher. Jack knew Reeder, and, as if paralyzed, let his two guns remain on the ground, and took up only his cutlass.

Jack would easily have killed both Sam and Reeder, who were at first afraid of him.

Reeder, instead of shooting Jack, replied that his obi had no power to hurt him, for he was christened, and that his name was no longer Quasher. Jack knew Reeder, and, as if paralyzed, let his two guns remain on the ground, and took up only his cutlass.

As I raised the gun to my face, there was a momentary lull in the hubbub around.

Knowing that it would be useless to try

and get a bead by "holding on the spot," because of the weight of the piece, I touched trigger, as she came up, the moment I caught sight of the white dot through the ports.

"Went off afore ye war ready," suggested one.

"Nervous," said another.

"Thinks it's a shot-gun," chimed in a third.

"Pum-center!" shouted the voice of the marker, and then came a momentary silence.

They wouldn't believe it until the board had been carefully examined by every one, somebody even digging for the bullet to make "sartin it warn't conjuration."

Well, I won the "pool" twenty-seven dollars, in five, ten, and twenty-five cent coins, quite a pile, tied up in an old handkerchief.

I will not stop to tell of the bitter disappointment expressed at the thought of a

"stranger takin' all that money outen the settlement," but beyond this ill-concealed vexation and even anger, I suffered no inconvenience.

The whole party returned to the house, and then began a scene of wild debauchery, quarreling and fighting that would be hard to describe.

Thoroughly disgusted, I determined to

order my horse and continue my journey, feeling that a night in the woods would be far preferable to one spent in that Pandemonium.

I thought that Boston Joe evinced rather

more displeasure at my leaving than was at

all consequent upon his losing a lodger, and

nevertheless I paid my score, and amid the jeers and hoots of the now thoroughly drunk crowd, I rode off.

Not wishing to "mix in," or "take a

"hand" in any such amusement, I turned to

retrace my steps to the house, when a tall,

gangling, red-headed specimen of the true

backwoodsman stepped to my side, and giv-

ing me a snap between the shoulders that

nearly upset my center of gravity, bantered

me to take a chance in the "pool" that was

then being made up.

It was to be a grand sweepstake, every-

body present putting in his dollar, the best

shot to take the pile.

My first inclination was to decline, but

on second thought, I determined, as the

easiest way out of it, to comply with the re-

quest.

Amid much noise, shouting, swearing,

and drinking, the match was finally arrang-

ed, the targets prepared, each man making

his own, and then the shooting began.

The water was deliciously cool, and I re-

mained some minutes laving my forehead

and face, and then again stooped forward

on hands and knees, to take a final draught.

Hardly had the motion been made, and

before my face had touched the water, the

sharp report of a rifle rung through the silent arches of the forest, a sudden, stinging

pain, almost paralyzing me by its intensity,

shot through my brain, and instantly I felt

a warm current trickling down my face.

Blinded and dizzy, I scrambled to my

feet, with a vague consciousness that flight,

instantaneous flight, alone could save my

life.

As though in a dream, or through a

heavy mist, I saw the figures of two men

dash out of the timber beside the trail, and

rush forward to where I stood supporting

myself to clinging to my horse's mane.

They were within ten feet of me, both,

I then saw, carrying a heavy knife in the

right hand, when I, with an effort that I did

not think I could put forth, swung myself

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